

between the old fatuous credulity and emancipation, than for any value they will possess to those who are already freethinkers, for to the former anything should be acceptable which tends to show the rapid broadening of thought even in some of the high places of orthodoxy. They indicate also the line of reflection along which we, who are free, have advanced to freedom, and point it out as the high-road which is open to all.

I now proceed to discuss the article in the *British Quarterly Review*, reproduced in the *New York Eclectic* for October 1876, I mentioned in the January issue of this Journal, and which I propose to make my text.

This article begins as follows:—"Before the end of the last century geology hardly existed as a science; and an inquiry as to the age of the world would have been unhesitatingly answered by the assertion that the earth was created in six days, 4004 years before the birth of Christ. Though further research has shown that the sacred text bears no such interpretation, those copies of the Authorized Version of the Bible, which are enriched with notes and marginal references, still keep up the formal assertion."

I will only pause here to point out to the admiration of the devout, the profound reverence of our Reviewer for the Bible—a reverence so deep that he is unable to speak even of the "authorized version" of it except with capitals, and to remark ("and my language is plain") that I venture to think we shall presently see that the "sacred text" bears, in point of fact, no other interpretation whatever, notwithstanding the research so jauntily alluded to, and that our writer's assumption is only one of a considerable number of deliberate and impudent misrepresentations—"which the same I am free to maintain."

I now beg particular attention to the following quotations from an article in the *Canadian Monthly* for January 1877, from the pen of one of Canada's profoundest thinkers, W. Lo Suer, and that they will bear it well in mind throughout the perusal of those articles. I know nothing more delicious than its polished and keen edged satire.

"And now where are we? Is it not the case that science, so feeble once in comparison with the strong prepossessions or instinctive beliefs of mankind—science, which formerly but picked up the crumbs which fell from the table of human reason, while metaphysics and theology lorded it at the board—science that was persecuted and cast out in the persons of its early professors, its Roger Beacons, Galileos, and Brunos—science, in which men saw no beauty or promise that they should desire it—is it not true that this stone, which the builders rejected, has become almost the head of the corner in the edifice of our civilization? Upon what are the eyes of all men waiting, but upon science to heal their diseases, and even cleanse their iniquities? Is it not true that theology itself—I speak now only of what you all know as well as I—is looking to science to place a true interpretation upon its records. 'Describe to us,' say the theologians, 'the physical history of the earth, and whatever you can satisfactorily prove, that we shall accept as the true sense of the Mosaic record, no matter what verbal difficulties may stand in the way. You have shown us that we must no longer talk of a six days' work in creation; we quite accept your amendment, and shall be prepared to give our best consideration to any others you may propose. As soon as you are quite sure about the doctrine of evolution, we think we shall have no difficulty in finding that, too, in a manner, outlined in our record.'

"This is an honor to which science, in its earlier stages never looked forward. It hoped to unravel progressively the mysteries of nature; but it never expected to be called in to assist in the task of Bible exegesis. Times have changed since the inventor of the telescope fell into the hands of the tormentors for his speculations on the solar system; or, coming down much later, since Buffon was compelled to pen a very humble retraction of certain errors which the doctors of the Sorbonne asserted they had discovered in his 'Système de la Nature.' Had he lived in the present day he might have corrected the errors of the doctors."

The cutting irony placed in the mouths of the theologians is very keen and bitter, and, writhe as they may, they cannot escape it.

It would, however, be scarcely justice to Mr. Lo Suer, to refrain from adding to the above quotation the noble words which follow. Speaking of the position and duties of the scientific teachers in a splendid peroration, he says, "He should dwell upon the great truth that emancipation from error means responsibility for a higher mode of life; and that, if it do not result in this it is valueless, if not worse than valueless, in causing truth to be evilly spoken of."

I shall now, in order to place the reader on a basis from which he will be enabled to form a competent judgement of the relative positions of science and theology, lay before him, very nearly in the words of the *Quarterly Reviewer* himself, a brief but clear explanation of what is called the "Nebular Hypothesis." The inception of this theory, which it has become the fashion to ascribe to Laplace, is in reality due to Sir Wm. Herschel; but Laplace gave to it, by mathematical demonstration, so clear a presumption of more than probability, that it constitutes at the present day the creed of the most advanced science as to the mode of formation of the solar system. There is indeed, about it, that strong appeal of verisimilitude to the cultivated understanding, which carries with it a conviction of its truth even to the unscientific mind.

It is supposed that a film of vaporuous matter filled up a space extending beyond that which is now bounded by the orbit of the outermost planet. It is assumed that this nebula possessed a rotary motion round its centre of gravity, and that the parts of it which were situated at the limits where the centrifugal force exactly counterbalanced the attractive force of the central nucleus were abandoned by the attracting inner mass. Thus, as the nucleus became more and more dense under the action of gravity, were formed a succession of rings, concentric with, and revolving round, the centre of gravity. Each ring would break up into masses which would be endowed with motions of rotation, and would in consequence, assume a spheroidal form. These masses formed the several planets, which, in their turn condensing, cast off, in some instances their outlying rings, as had been done by the central mass, and thus formed the satellites which attend the planets. As each planet was in turn cast off, the central mass necessarily contracted itself within the orbit of that last formed; till, after casting off Mercury, it gathered with immense energy round its own centre, and formed the sun. It may further be useful to remember that, while the operation of gravitation in a revolving mass of attenuated matter, contracted and condensed it, the rotary motion generated that intense heat, which made the earth of old a molten sphere tortured with furious convulsions, and which keeps Saturn and Jupiter in the same state to-day.—(To be continued.)

The Rev. Mr. Buckley, of Stamford, Conn., was recently arraigned before a criminal court charged with conspiracy, in procuring by ways that are dark, the conviction of certain violators of the Excise law of his country. In justification of his conduct, Buckley cited the Scriptures in his defence, declaring that he could produce twenty-five cases from the Old Testament and five from the New Testament in which deception was used to further the ends of God. The inference he sought to draw from this fact was that the end justifies the means, and that lying for a good purpose is not a sin, but a laudable virtue. The exigencies of life require that, above all things, we rely on truthfulness, and in practicing and apologizing for lying, men like Mr. Buckley strike a blow at society itself.—*Exchange*.

Mr. Buckley can easily prove that the bible commends lying and deceit when practiced in the furtherance of religion and for the glory of "God," but we say, so much the worse for the bible. It is time for the civilized world to consign a book teaching such immoral doctrines to oblivion; or at most to place it in the same category as the mythologies of ancient Greece and Rome. Following its precepts or example tends to injustice and immorality.—*Ed. JOURNAL*.